

continue to review these differences and to make other appropriate adjustments. Hopefully, as we move along, there will be others. I pledge to him that I will work closely with him as we move towards completion of the important work on this bill.

Again, I thank the distinguished Senator for his consideration and his efforts in helping us to get to this point. I appreciate it very much.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, the regular order says we finish this discussion, but we are waiting for one of the Senators to see if they really want to speak.

Mr. DORGAN. The regular order is that I am recognized following the unanimous consent request, and I was recognized for an hour. I will not take all of that hour. The regular order is that the Chair would recognize me.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, thank you very much. I was happy to allow the unanimous consent request to be granted.

#### THE FARM CRISIS

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I know the Senator from Iowa wishes to join in this discussion, and I am happy to have his input.

I was driving home last evening after the Agriculture appropriations conference committee, and I was once again struck by how some in politics here just sort of shrug off some things that are so important. I am referring especially to the future of family farming. It is true that almost every day you see something around here in which someone treats the important things too lightly and then someone treats the light things in a far too serious way. It is hard to see that things are treated appropriately.

There is no more urgent need in this country, in my judgment, than to address the farm crisis at this time. If we do not act on a timely basis, we will not have family farmers left in the Farm Belt given their current circumstances.

Again, this chart shows the price of wheat. This is the income our farmers receive for their production. In 1 year in North Dakota, our farmers lost 98 percent of all their net income. It was just washed away. Their net income was virtually all gone. It was a 98 percent drop in their paycheck. Think of it this way: What if this were your salary or your wage? Look at what has happened, month after month after month after month. This is the gross returns that our farmers receive. The price of wheat in our part of the country is down, down, down, way down. In fact, the price of wheat has fallen 57 percent since the Freedom to Farm law was passed.

These families are out there living on the land, turning the yard light on, il-

luminating the dreams and hopes of a family that is trying to make a go of it. They are discovering they are going broke in record numbers and nobody seems to care much because we have people that chant on street corners in Washington, DC, "the marketplace, the marketplace, the free market."

There is no free market. What a bunch of unmitigated baloney. This is no free market. There has never been a free market in agriculture, and there will not be one.

This is picture of a farmer that is being sold out. This is an auction sale. All his equipment is being sold. These farmers go broke and they have an auction sale. They are told, gee, you didn't make it in the free market.

Let's examine this free market. This farmer plants some wheat in the spring and harvests it in the fall, if the farmer has some good luck. If it doesn't rain too much, and if it rains enough; if the insects don't come and if the crop disease doesn't come; if it doesn't hail; if all those things don't occur or do occur, this farmer may or may not get a crop. And then this farmer puts that crop, after a hard day's harvest, into a truck and puts it on a county road and goes to market. He pulls up to an elevator and the elevator manager says, "You can dump that grain in my country elevator." Guess what it costs a farmer to produce that crop? It costs five dollars a bushel to produce that bushel of wheat, and the elevator man says he is prepared to give the farmer \$2.50. In other words, he is prepared to give only half of what it costs the farmer to raise it.

The elevator man says, "What I want to do is to put that grain on the railroad car and the railroad company will charge you twice what it is worth to haul it, and they will haul to the miller who will make a record profit grinding it, and they will send it perhaps to a grocery manufacturer and they will puff it and pop it and crisp it and flake it and they will put it in a bright colored box." Then they are going to ship it to the grocery store shelf and somebody out there is going to come and buy it in Pittsburgh, or Fargo, or Los Angeles. These consumers are going to pay \$4 a box for a bright-colored box of wheat that is puffed up and called puffed wheat now. The person who put the puff in it is making record profits, the person who hauled it on the railroad car is making record profits, and the miller is making record profits. Everybody is making record profits, except the farmers who got their hands dirty, gassed up the tractor, plowed the ground, seeded and fertilized the ground, harvested the crop, and hauled it to market. They are going broke in record numbers. Yet, nobody seems to care a bit.

Last night, in that conference committee, they were stone deaf to a proposal by this President who said we need \$8 billion in emergency aid, and we need it now if we are going to solve this farm crisis. They rejected that on

a straight party-line vote. It is not that there is not enough money. They think they have enough to give an \$80 billion tax cut. The sky is the limit there. But how about another \$4 billion for family farmers? That is what we were talking about last night. We were asking just another \$4 billion more to save family farmers. They have \$80 billion for a tax cut, but they don't have another \$4 billion to invest in the lives of these people, who I think are the salt of the Earth. Family farmers are the ultimate risk-takers.

Let me mention one more point about this free market. I talked about the monopoly railroads that haul the grain and the monopoly grain trade firms. Wherever you look, in every direction our farmers face a monopoly. It doesn't matter which way they turn. Let's say we have a cow out here. They are raising wheat, corn, soybeans, and they are raising some cows. They are going to send the cow to market. But are they going to make money off that cow? I don't think so, because that cow is going to be sold into a monopoly. Four firms control over 80 percent of all the slaughter of beef cattle in this country. That farmer markets up to a monopoly. That farmer moves the grain to a monopoly railroad and markets into a monopoly grain trade.

Then we have these half-baked economists who talk about the free market. Harry Truman used to say, "Give me a one-armed economist. I'm sick and tired hearing 'on this hand' and 'on the other hand.'" I am not sure how many economists we have around here talking about the free market. Maybe we ought to put a robot out on the street corner and let him chant, "There is no free market here."

In every direction, the farmer is getting fleeced. This Congress, for a change, needs to say we are going to be on the side of the ultimate producers in this country, who are the economic all-stars in this country. If we don't, we won't have any family farmers left.

I had a young boy named Wyatt write to me. He is a sophomore at a school in Stanley, ND. The other day in a letter to me, he said, "I am a 15-year-old farm boy. My dad can feed 180 people, but he can't feed his own family." That says something about family farming. It says how productive they are, how important they are, how incredible they are as producers, and what they have to face in a market controlled by economic giants that pillage and prey on these family farmers every day and in every way. And, they do it in such a way that family farmers can't make a living.

This Government and this Congress, has to decide whether we are going to stand up for these people or not. We are going to force another vote on the floor of the Senate. We have had two votes to get a decent support price, and we lost by a handful each time. But for those who don't want to vote on this, I say: Brace yourself, because you are going to have to vote again. We are not

going to quit. Family farmers would not expect us to quit. They don't quit and we are not going to quit them. We are going to vote on this again until we get a result that says this Congress stands with family farmers and that this Congress cares about the future of farm families.

I would be happy to yield to the Senator from Iowa, if he has a question.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator for yielding for a question. First of all, I thank the Senator for a very eloquent and forceful statement on what is happening out there and, really, the shame of this Congress in not addressing it.

As I look at your charts here and see the free-fall in the price of wheat over the last couple of years—since the 1996 so-called Freedom to Farm bill was passed—I look at that and I wonder what happened to the price of bread. Has that come down? What about all the wheat products, like pasta and all the things into which wheat goes? I ask the Senator, what happened? Are the consumers making out on this and getting a cut-rate deal at the grocery store?

Mr. DORGAN. No, no. This is about corporate profits, not about advantages to consumers at the disadvantage of farmers. What is taken out of the hide of family farmers in collapsed prices doesn't go into the pockets of consumers through cheaper bread prices. Take a look at the price of a loaf of bread when the price of wheat peaked about 2½ years ago. Then go to your grocery store and look at the price of a loaf of bread today. Ask yourself, gee, if farmers suffered a nearly 60-percent drop in the price for wheat, what happened to the price of a loaf of bread? The answer is that somebody in between is taking more profit. But the consumer hasn't gotten the benefit. This country always had a cheap food policy. Will it have a policy that protects the basic income requirements of family farmers?

Mr. HARKIN. One of my neighbors keeps asking me. He said, "I hear about all these farm problems." He lives in a city. He said, "I can't understand, if the farmers aren't making money, how come I'm not seeing lower prices in the store?" They don't understand that. I think the Senator from North Dakota pointed out that consumers aren't seeing it in the store. The fact is that bread has gone up in the last couple years, not down. The large grain companies, the shippers, the monopolies are reaping a windfall. They are buying these products from the farmer, not at wholesale, but at fire sale prices.

In listening to the Senator, I could not help but remember what John Kennedy said in Sioux City, IA, when he was running for President in 1960. He made the statement: "The farmer is the only person who buys retail, sells wholesale, and pays the freight both ways." Well, now today farmers aren't even selling wholesale. They are selling

at fire sale prices—not only wheat, but corn and soybeans. And pork prices, this year, are probably going to average their lowest since 1974. They are working at extremely low cattle prices. So all across the agricultural sector, we have a terrible crisis.

Now, as the Senator pointed out again last night in our conference committee, when we met to try to do something, to answer this crisis and need in rural America, we were told that, no, we would not do it, we can only do a little bit. I liken last night to somebody dying of thirst and you give them a thimbleful of water. That is what those who we were in conference with last night basically did to the farmers. They slapped them in the face and gave them a thimbleful of water when they are dying of thirst. It is a shame.

It came down to a straight party-line vote. It is very unfortunate that it had to be on a party-line basis when this issue begs for nonpartisanship and bipartisanship. Yet, it has evolved into a partisan situation. That is a real shame. I think it is a shame that our colleagues voted against any meaningful help. As the Senator pointed out, we had about a \$3 billion difference. In other words, for \$3 billion, we could have really met the needs of farmers all over this country—not only the farmers in Iowa and North Dakota, but the farmers in Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, and all over the country. Farmers who are either suffering from the fall in prices, or because they have had a drought, or floods, or disease. All of these things have piled up this year to really put agriculture in dire straits.

No, they don't have the money for that, as the Senator pointed out, but they do have money for an \$80 billion tax cut.

I am sure the Senator would agree with me. I met with farmers in Iowa not too long ago and I talked about this tax cut. I said, "Who do you think is going to get it? I will give you a hint: It isn't you." They are not going to get it; it is going to go to upper-income people. We know that. But for \$3 billion we could have really helped pull these farmers out. And we still can if we have the will.

I ask the Senator from North Dakota in my closing question—and I thank him again for his strong support for the American farmer, the family farmer, and for always being front and center here on the floor and in our committee meetings, for fighting for those family farmers. Lord knows, we don't have too many people around here fighting for them anymore. But the strength and the passion and courage of the Senator from North Dakota has gone a long way toward at least helping us get this far, getting something through to help our farmers—even though it is not going to be enough to save them, unless we can have some more action on the floor. The Senator has indicated that when that bill comes back, we are going to have more action on this floor. We are not going

to go away quietly. I join with the Senator from North Dakota in saying that. We are not going to go away quietly. We are going to be here until the last bell rings of this Congress to do everything we can to help those family farmers.

I thank the Senator from North Dakota again for his eloquent remarks and for his steadfastness in standing up for those who really are the backbone of this country, those who have worked hard, produced our food and fiber and the products they have raised in our export channels have been the only thing that has kept our balance of payments and our balance of trade with other countries at least somewhat positive. It has only been agriculture. It hasn't been anything else, just agriculture. And yet to let them go down the drain because of monopoly practices I think is just a shame, and I think it is something we have to address.

I thank the Senator from North Dakota for, again, leading the fight.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Iowa. He and I and others from the farm belt feel very strongly about this issue because it is not just some cerebral discussion about economic theory. It is about thousands and thousands of people who have had dreams and hopes of continuing to operate their family farm and raising their family out in the country and tilling the soil and producing food. It is about whether they are going to be able to continue to do that. This isn't a bluff nor is this crying wolf.

What has happened in my State is the complete collapse of grain prices coupled with the worst crop disease in a century. It has just put thousands of family farmers in a position where they are not going to be able to continue to farm.

I would like to read just a couple of letters. This one is from a young man named Eric. He graduated from high school 10 years ago. He is a farmer. His family and his wife's family were farmers. Eric wrote to me and he said, "When I started out, I knew it wasn't going to be easy. The only support either family, mine or my wife's, was able to afford was advice and hard work." They could not afford more support than that.

He goes on to say, "In our area we have been hit with heavy rains the past 5 years which has greatly reduced the yield of our crops, and caused crop disease. One of those years we had to burn the crop off of the fields so it would be able to dry enough to farm the following year." That, he said, was like "burning dreams."

He is raising cattle, crops, hogs. He writes, "As of this fall we decided that we would have to reduce the number of acres we farm. I am watching my hopes and dreams fade away as I reduce these acres. Yet, I work 16 plus hours a day to try to keep the farm going again for another year."

He adds, "My wife works about 55 hours a week just to try to pay household bills. She works off the farm and then comes home and does the farm work as well. At one time I had hopes of being able to pass this farm down to the next generation. Now the only hope I have is that we can just continue."

This is a letter I received the other day from Barbara. Barbara says, "I have been married for 19 years. I have two sons. It was our dream, my dream and my husband's that one day this farm of ours would belong to our boys."

Then she describes the way they have tried to make ends meet and can't. "My husband not only farms, he works out in the winter and finds as many part-time jobs in the summer as he can to help supplement our income. We raise hogs to help supplement the farming also. I work in the county school system during the school year. I am a cook in the elementary school. I also drive a bus some evenings after working in the cafeteria. I also work as part-time help in our local hospital and dental office. I'm an emergency medical technician and, my husband is a firefighter with the local fire district."

She writes, "Our oldest son is 17 and works part-time during the school year and this past summer went on part of a run with a custom harvesting crew to make some money. Our youngest son has a job mowing cemeteries for our local church and helps on the farm. He is 15."

"As you can see we have full schedules which don't allow us much in the form of extra cash or time for vacation or leisure. The part I can't understand," Barbara writes, "is why after working 17 or 18 hours a day we can't make enough to live on. My husband went to the elevator yesterday to haul in some wheat to pay our expenses for the coming month. He was told he would get \$1.82 a bushel for the wheat."

By the way, she doesn't write this, but USDA says it costs them at least \$4.75 a bushel to raise that. Her husband goes to the elevator and is told that he will be paid \$1.82 a bushel. "You tell me," she writes, "how we are supposed to pay our bills with these prices?"

She said, "A couple of weeks ago, our youngest son came to me and he asked if he could talk to me. I said yes. And he asked if we would be mad at him if he chose not to farm after he finished school. He didn't want his dad or grandfather to be upset with him. He has seen how much work it is and how little the family is getting out of it, but still feels the love of the land and pride in continuing another generation of farmers."

This young boy asks if they would be angry if he doesn't try it. She says, "I have come to fear that my generation is the last, if we survive. It's hard to tell your children that you really wish they would not come back to farming because there's no future there for them."

Mr. President, these are two letters from Eric and Barbara, a farmer and farm wife, both struggling out there, trying to make a living with collapsed prices and crop disease and a farm crisis that gives these folks depression-era prices for their crops.

What makes me so angry about all this is in thinking about it in driving home last night after the conference committee. What makes me so angry is there is this kind of blithe attitude about it here. It is an attitude that dismisses this crisis and says: Well, this is just another day; this is just another problem; this is just another group of Americans who want something.

These people don't want anything special. But they don't want to be turned loose in a circumstance where they are told you compete in a free market and the market isn't free. Everything that they do in this economic system means that someone is preying upon them, and that someone is taking money out of their pockets unfairly. Then the Congress somehow says we don't have the time to help; we don't have the resources to help; you are too small to matter; all we care about are those who are too big to fail.

And as I said when I started, I drove home last night thinking about the story I read about a \$100 billion liability outfit that gets in trouble and the Federal Reserve Board apparently convenes a meeting of bankers. They get a bunch of aspirin together and fluff up the pillows and say, "Gee, can't we make you comfortable. We sure wouldn't want you to fail. You are too big to fail." They got 20-some banks in that circumstance. I guess we got other hedge funds out there and a whole series of speculators as well.

But what about these folks? What about the folks who Congress says are too small to matter. These are the folks who day after day are holding auction sales, standing around watching their farm implements and watching their personal possessions being auctioned off because they can't make a living. It is not because they are not good at what they do. They are the best in the world. There is nobody in the world who measures up. Nobody. Not even close. Yet this economic system is stacked against them, stacked against them in a way that is almost criminal.

You know what we ought to do?

These folks face a railroad that hauls their grain and charges them double the price they ought to be charged, and they market that grain up through a grain trade in which there are just a few companies. That is not free enterprise. And then they send their cattle up where you have four companies controlling over 80 percent of the slaughter.

You know what we ought to do? We ought to put an independent counsel on all those issues. How about an independent counsel investigating the marketing of cattle, and looking into the four companies that control the

slaughter of over 80 percent of the cattle in this country.

How about an independent counsel tracking down railroad prices on behalf of family farmers to see if they are fair? How about an independent counsel looking at the grain trade to see whether this is truly a fair market?

I could go on at great length about that. What about an investigation on behalf of these folks that says to them we are intending that you have a fair deal, and that you have a fair opportunity to make a living. And, if you don't, we are going to help. That is part of what yesterday was about. It is part of what last night's conference committee was about when, unfortunately, on a party-line vote the folks in that committee said, no, we can't afford it; we don't have any money.

The President says, I need \$8 billion in emergency aid to deal with the farm crisis. The same people who said we have \$80 billion to provide a new tax cut said we don't have \$8 billion above the current budget level to meet the President's request to deal with the farm crisis.

I am telling you, that is a misplaced sense of priorities. We have had two votes in the Senate on this issue of providing a decent support price. When I say "decent," this is very modest. It is much more modest than I think is necessary. But even at that, we lost each of those votes by a handful.

I say to those who were in the conference committee last night, who voted against standing up for family farmers, you are going to vote again. One way or the other, you are going to vote again in the U.S. Senate, and the vote is going to be on this question: Are you willing to stand up and support family farming in times of crisis? When prices collapse and you have this price valley, and those family farms simply fall through the cracks, are you willing to stand and say, "Let us build a bridge across that valley," or do you say that family farmers don't matter?

Are you willing to say that it doesn't matter that corporate agrifactories will farm America from California to Maine? Will big corporate agrifactories get up in the morning, put on their Big Ben coveralls and milk 3,500 cows at one lick, because that is corporate agrifactories? Or will they plow their tractors as far as they can go on a tank of gas and then turn around and plow back? Do you think it will benefit this country to turn out all the farm yard lights in the country and say to these families, "You don't matter; we will replace you with a big agrifactory"? This country will have lost something very important and it will have done so because this Congress said that they don't matter. If they do that, this Congress will have to answer to a lot of the American people about their sense of priorities.

This has become a legislative landfill in recent months. I can go down on two hands the list of important things we should have done that have been taken

out in the country and covered over with dirt, because we have too many people in here saying, "No, you can't do the important issues; we have to track around chasing the tail of unimportant issues."

This is one issue that a number of us from farm country are not going to let be sent out to some legislative landfill and be covered up. One way or another, we are going to push and fight and scrap on behalf of those families who still have their hopes and dreams to make a living as family farmers. We are going to push and fight to the end to get a decent, kinder program out of this country that will say to family farmers in this country, "You matter; you matter to this country and its future."

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. CONRAD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, very briefly, I thank my colleague from North Dakota, Senator DORGAN, for once again standing up and speaking out on behalf of the farm families of our State and farm families all across the country, because these are desperate times.

In North Dakota, from 1996 to 1997, farm income declined 98 percent. That is according to the Government's own figures. That is a disaster by any definition.

Last night, I was absolutely shocked to learn our Republican colleagues killed each and every attempt to strengthen the financial aid package for farmers. It makes me wonder what part of disaster they don't understand.

We have the lowest prices for farm commodities in 50 years. That is right, the lowest prices in 50 years. Combined with that, we have a whole series of natural disasters all across the country, including our State, where a terrible fungus called scab is loose in the fields that dramatically reduces production and that which is produced is discounted when the farmer takes it to the elevator to sell it. The result is a tremendous cash flow crunch on our farmers, forcing thousands of them off the land. We have record farm auctions. I have bankers stopping me in every town I go to and saying, "Senator, there is a disaster occurring. There is something radically wrong. What is being done?"

Last night, our Republican colleagues said, "Well, what we propose to do is provide a dime and three pennies for every bushel of wheat and other grains." A dime and three pennies. Frankly, that is worse than a Band-Aid. A Band-Aid at least covers a wound. If that is going to be the answer, then we might just as well say that the farm policy coming from our friends is a policy of liquidation; a policy that says to family farmers, "You're done; you might as well sell out, because this country does not value what you do."

Mr. President, this can't be the way it ends. We have a disastrous farm pol-

icy. I have said our farmers are being hit by a triple whammy of bad prices, bad weather and bad policy. We can't control the weather, we can't control the prices, but we can do something about farm policy, and we have an obligation to do so.

When our colleagues are saying we ought to cut taxes by \$80 billion and then turn around and say, "But we can't add \$3 billion to this package to provide financial support for family farmers," they have described their priorities very clearly. Unfortunately, the conclusion is, family farmers are left out. They are being told, "Forget it, you don't matter." That is just unacceptable. There is going to be a fight. We are not going to go quietly in the night as thousands of farm families are shoved off the land. That cannot be an acceptable conclusion to this year's legislative business.

Mr. DORGAN. Will the Senator yield on that point?

Mr. CONRAD. I will be happy to yield.

Mr. DORGAN. There are some who don't want to take the time to deal with important issues. This is, I think, one of the most important issues. We just dealt with the Vacancies Act on judicial nominations. How does the Senator view the farm crisis versus the judicial Vacancies Act we spent some time debating?

Mr. CONRAD. I think back to the Interior appropriations bill. I don't know how many days that was on the floor here. It was day after day after day. In fact, when I look back on the last several months, it is hard for me to recall our dealing with anything of great significance. In fact, there have been long periods where nothing was dealt with on the floor, and then we are told, "Well, the future of family farmers that hangs in the balance, there is just not enough time to deal with that, not enough resources to deal with it."

Interestingly enough, our competitors don't have that view. The Europeans, who are our major competitors, are spending \$50 billion a year to support their producers. We spend \$5 billion, and we wonder why we are losing the fight. We would never do this in a military confrontation, but in a trade confrontation we seem to think it is fine to say to our farmers, "Well, you go out there and compete against the French farmer and the German farmer, and while your at it, go take on the French Government and the German Government as well." That is not a fair fight.

I say to my colleague, it seems to me as though we have the time to make a difference in the lives of literally thousands of farm families all across America who are facing a financial disaster. This isn't some kind of downturn, this is a cliff, and thousands of farmers are being pushed right off it.

The question is, What are we going to do? Are we going to do nothing or next to nothing, or are we going to fight back? Are we going to say to the Euro-

peans, "No, we're not going to accept a circumstance in which you simply buy these markets, you go out there and because you have so many more resources," because somehow in Europe they have decided they want people out across the land, that that is good social policy.

Mr. DORGAN. If the Senator will yield for one additional point.

Mr. CONRAD. I will be happy to yield.

Mr. DORGAN. We have been talking about financial modernization. It seems to me the farm crisis is more important than that. That is ahead of us. The Internet tax freedom bill, it seems to me the farm crisis is more important than that. We apparently are going to take that up.

I mentioned when I began this discussion the juxtaposition of a hedge fund nearly going broke on Wall Street and the Federal Reserve Board getting so concerned that they convened the bankers and said, "Gee, can't we help those people; prop up their pillow, help them get back to bed, give them a nap and get them some strength again?"

And it is interesting to me that, in fact, the Fed even signaled when that was going on, they were going to reduce interest rates. So today, lo and behold, they lowered interest rates. It is the "too big to fail" thing.

It reminded me of what Will Rogers once said. He said, "You know, if one day all the lawyers on Wall Street failed to show up for work, wouldn't anybody miss lunch. But if all the cows in America failed to show up to the barn to get milked, then we would have a problem." What Will Rogers was trying to say in a humorous way is "What really matters in this country is what we produce." And there is no more all-star producer in America than the family farmer.

Yet this country has an economic system that says to them, "There's no connection between effort and reward. You make the effort. You go broke." And that is what is wrong with this system. This farm bill of ours does not work. Everybody ought to now be willing to confess that and decide that this farm bill does not work and we want to save family farmers. Let us join together in a bipartisan way to make something happen that really will work to save family farmers.

Mr. CONRAD. My colleague is precisely right. It will be a tragedy for this country if we let this circumstance unfold. The hard reality is if we fail to act and act decisively, literally thousands of family farmers are going to be pushed out of business. And they are not coming back.

I just went to a meeting in my State—one of the major farm organizations—and I stood at the back of the room. It was so striking because so many of the heads sitting in the chairs in front of me were white haired. The farmers of this country are aging and aging dramatically. There were hardly any young people in the room.

It is easy to understand why, because, as Senator DORGAN read from the letters of young people, they were saying to their parents, "Gee, will you hold it against me if I don't go into farming?" Well, it is pretty hard to justify going into farming. It is pretty hard to justify staying on the family farm because we, as a country, have said, as a matter of policy, "We're not going to be there for you." Our competitors are going to spend \$50 billion a year supporting their producers, and we are going to spend one-tenth as much. So we say, "You go into the fight, but you go unarmed."

Mr. President, we can do better than that. America is better than that. And the loss to this country will be incalculable if we push an entire generation of farmers off the land. I know that at some point we will wake up and we will say, "Gee, we have a program to get people back out there." And what will it cost us then, as we realize it makes no sense to push everybody into the cities of America, that instead we ought to have people spread out across the land?

But right now we are headed on a collision course with economic reality. And that reality is: Our farmers are at such a disadvantage that they cannot survive. So that is the question that is before the body tonight. And that is the question that is going to be before the body tomorrow. Are we going to do something to help these family farmers through this valley of extraordinarily low prices and natural disasters or are we just going to let them go? I pray that we respond and help family farm agriculture survive in this country. It is right at the heart of what makes this country strong.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

Mr. DOMENICI addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALLARD). The Senator from New Mexico.

#### ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous agreement, the Senate will now proceed to the conference report to accompany H.R. 4060.

Mr. DOMENICI. Under the unanimous consent agreement, there are other Senators who have time on this bill. I do not know if they are going to use their time. I am informed I can yield—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If the Senator will withhold for one moment. The report will be stated.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The committee on conference on the disagreeing votes on the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 4060), have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses this report, signed by all of the conferees.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will proceed to the consideration of the conference report.

(The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of September 25, 1998.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico and Senator REID control 10 minutes jointly.

Mr. DOMENICI addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I will try to stay within 5 minutes. I thank the Senate which will be adopting the conference report. It is a good report.

We will put a statement in that identifies some of the very new approaches to better governance. We do not have that completely in the Department yet, but we have some new ideas that we are imposing on the Department that will permit it to be run a little better than in the past.

I want to change to another subject, and that is the Tennessee Valley Authority and the \$75 million that was, this year, put in the President's budget for the nonpower aspects of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Mr. President, I hope that nobody is trying to make political hay out of the fact that the U.S. House of Representatives would not fund the \$75 million for the TVA in this year's appropriations bill, and as a consequence we did not fund it. Let me tell you why the House would not fund it, and make sure that the RECORD is replete with the background information that the U.S. House had last year and this year regarding the \$75 million.

First of all, there is a gentleman, who I do not know, named Craven Crowell—Chairman Craven Crowell. I think he was appointed to the board by the Clinton-Gore administration in 1993.

In 1997, meeting with Members of Congress and the administration, the Chairman argued that TVA's so-called "nonpower programs," which include flood control and navigation on the Tennessee River, as well as management of some unique resources on the Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area, indicated that these nonpower programs should be transferred to other Federal agencies, leaving the Tennessee Valley Authority to focus solely on the production of electrical power.

Less than 1 month later, this very proposal to no longer fund that kind of activity because it should be transferred to other Federal agencies found its way into the 1998 budget request. The TVA Chairman had made an interesting proposal just a couple of weeks prior, and already it had been incorporated into the administration's budget. There is no way that that would have happened if people in the administration had not been aware of what Chairman Crowell was planning to propose, and if they had not given him the green light to do that.

I would like to incorporate in the RECORD a news release dated February 6, 1997, "President's Budget Supports Ending TVA Appropriations." I ask

unanimous consent that the news release be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

#### PRESIDENT'S BUDGET SUPPORTS ENDING TVA APPROPRIATIONS

TVA's request for \$106 million in federal funding for 1998 and its proposal to eliminate all taxpayer funding of TVA's appropriated programs by Fiscal Year 1999 received support from the Clinton Administration today in the President's budget submitted to Congress.

"We very much appreciate the administration's support of this funding level for 1998 and the proposal to phase out all federal funding of appropriated programs by Fiscal Year 1999," TVA Chairman Craven Crowell said at a news conference in Knoxville.

The President's budget also directs TVA and the Army Corps of Engineers to complete a joint study by September 1, 1997, on the integration of TVA and Corps activities to improve the operation of the Tennessee and Cumberland river systems.

"Future cooperation between TVA and the Corps could be the linchpin that makes it possible to end all federal funding for TVA's appropriated programs," Crowell said. "We believe more cooperation between TVA and the Corps would be a win-win situation for both of us and would greatly reduce expenditures of tax dollars."

As noted in the President's budget, TVA will work with Congress, state and local governments and other interested parties in a major effort to find alternate ways to fund, organize and manage the taxpayer-funded programs.

Crowell also said that a 17-member task force has been formed to work out the details of the proposal. Kate Jackson, executive vice president of the Resource Group, will chair the task force, which includes representatives from all parts of TVA.

In his 1998 budget, the President recommends the same level of funding TVA received in 1997. The budget recommendation includes \$81.5 million for water and land stewardship; \$7.9 million for Land Between the Lakes, an increase of nearly \$2 million over this year's funding; \$6.6 million for a feasibility study on a proposed new navigation lock at Chickamauga Dam; \$6 million for the TVA Environmental Research Center in Muscle Shoals; and \$4 million for economic development.

Funding requests for the Environmental Research Center and economic development are down \$9 million and \$11 million, respectively, reflecting TVA's previously announced plan to phase out appropriated funds for those activities.

TVA uses federal funds to manage the Tennessee River system, maintain 11,000 miles of shoreline and 420,000 acres of public land, conduct environmental research and promote economic development.

The federally appropriated funds are separate from TVA's power budget which is financed from power sales. Revenues from power sales totaled almost \$5.7 billion in 1996. TVA provides power to 160 distributors who serve nearly 8 million customers in seven southeastern states.

The 1998 fiscal year begins Oct. 1, 1997, and ends Sept. 30, 1998.

Mr. DOMENICI. This is a TVA release that suggests that Chairman Crowell and others have decided that they do not need the \$75 million and that other Federal agencies are going to take over. And the U.S. House had this release, had the proposal to eliminate Federal funding of TVA's appropriated programs in January of 1997.